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Human Rights Under Amended Indian Act Good News: Commission

Ottawa – June 19, 2002 – The Canadian Human Rights Commission welcomes the proposed extension of human rights protection under the Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA) to members of Canada's First Nations.

"This amendment to the Indian Act is long overdue," stated the Acting Chief Commissioner Anne Adams. "Canada's First Nations people have as much right to full human rights protection under the law as all other citizens." She added that "the Commission has been calling for this change for several years."

The CHRC has been unable to offer redress to many First Nations persons over the years because of section 67.

Last week, the federal government introduced amendments to the Indian Act, including removing its exemption from federal human rights legislation. As it reads currently, the CHRA cannot affect any provision of the Indian Act, meaning that many complaints involving the alleged denial of services or employment on First Nations reserves cannot be investigated by the Commission.

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